

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 37.

Price, Five Cents.



"OH! SAVE ME, SIR! SAVE ME!" MOANED THE GIRL, AS A YELL FROM THE POSSE BEHIND WARNED JESSE JAMES THAT HE HAD AGAIN BEEN SIGHTED.—(CHAPTER CCXI.)

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Jesse James' Exploits.

By W. B. LAWSON.

CHAPTER 211.

THE CHASE.

It was a moonlight night in the early eighties.

The air was balmy and the foliage green and abundant, in spite of the fact that October was waning.

The scene was the extreme suburbs of Placerville, California, a town overflowing with stockmen, miners, cowpunchers and tenderfoot prospectors. The peaks of the Sierras towered in the distance, while a lower fringe of woodland showed the line of the foothills. Fruit trees and shrubs almost hid the few frame buildings and log cabins, for in this vicinity there had been little of man's interference.

The road leading from Placerville grew narrow and rocky as it wound away from the habitations.

Silence reigned upon this particular night until moon and stars showed the hour following midnight.

Then a solitary horseman emerged from the shadow of one of the buildings, and moved stealthily forward.

Horse and man seemed one, so perfectly were both proportioned and so harmonious was their every movement.

The cautious rider had hardly passed out into the moonlight when a long, shrill blast of a whistle sounded.

A man, who had been watching upon the roof of a neighboring house, suddenly sprang to his feet, and began a series of frantic gestures.

Instantly, the stalwart rider leaned forward in his saddle, and laid a brawny hand upon the shining neck of his magnificent mount.

"Ha! It is as I expected! The spies are watching us, Star King! No doubt, they have tracked us since daybreak yesterday! We must ride for it, my beauty!" he muttered.

He touched his pet as he spoke, and the horse sprang forward. His feet spurned the ground as he vanished in the shadows at a rapid rate of speed.

"Whoop! Hi, thar! Hello, sheriff!" shouted the man on the roof.

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There was a clatter of hoofs, and mounted men came from all directions.

There was a sprinkling of cowboys, Indians, miners, business men and detectives.

They seemed to have been hidden behind every rock and shanty in the vicinity, evidently lying in wait for the man who had just been outlined in the moonlight.

"Hyar we be, Bat Lynn!" shouted the sheriff of the county.

The man on the roof glanced down at the posse below him, and then gave his first comprehensive information.

"It's Jesse James! After him, men! He's headed for the foothills!"

"Come on, men!" called a manly voice, and Will Star, a famous Pinkerton detective, separated his mustang from the group and put himself beside the sheriff, at the head of the posse.

Bat Lynn dropped from the low roof, almost into the saddle that had been provided for him.

A second later there was a chorus of hoof beats, as the posse dashed forward, with their quarry in the lead.

No sterner group of men ever chased a criminal to cover.

It would go hard with the famous bandit, should he fall into their hands, and, to a casual observer, this fate seemed probable.

Jesse James alone would scoff at such a happening.

As he looked back and listened, there was not a trace of fear upon his countenance.

The famous outlaw was accustomed to danger.

He had been chased before, both by men and bloodhounds, but, so far, no human ingenuity had equalled his cunning.

Yet, with the advantage which his enemies had

over him at present, the outlook was not as cheerful as he could wish.

All depended upon the stallion's ability to run away from his pursuers. There were hiding-places ahead, and the bandit had friends in the grim mountains.

The question was, Would he be able to reach them?

"Faster, Star King! The hounds are coming!" muttered the man, as he heard the sound of laughter behind him, and felt the trembling of the earth as the posse thundered in his wake.

The brave horse increased its speed for the space of a second, then bolted so suddenly as to nearly unseat its rider.

They were passing a low hut, the last sign of human habitation, and some one had dashed out of the door, almost under the feet of the flying animal.

Jesse James uttered a curse, and raised his foot to drive his spurs into the stallion's side.

Then a sharp glance from his eagle eye made him rein up and slip from the saddle, with one hand resting gently upon the glossy neck of the noble horse.

"A girl, by thunder! Another foot, Star King, and you'd have stamped her to a jelly! What do you mean, my girl, by such a reckless action?"

The outlaw uttered the words hurriedly, as he caught the young girl by the shoulder and took a look at her face, clearly outlined in the moonlight.

"Oh, save me, sir! Save me!" moaned the girl, who was wringing her hands together. "There's a fight inside there! They are throwing the dice to see which shall marry me! I implore you to save me!"

"Quick, then!"

Jesse James responded promptly, after catching a sound from the shanty.

Catching the girl around the waist, he raised her to the saddle.

The next second a yell from the posse behind him told that he had once more been sighted.

Star King fairly bounded ahead, and was once more lost in the shadows.

The horse understood the situation almost as well as his master. They could not have been overtaken if this speed had been continued.

But the added weight of the girl soon began to tell.

Jesse James leaned low in the saddle, and encouraged his faithful friend with low-spoken words.

The horse responded nobly, but a loud shout behind told that the posse was gaining.

Suddenly, the young girl seemed to become aware of her rescuer's position.

She clasped her arms about him, and sat as erect as possible.

"Who is it? What is happening?" she gasped, in a faint voice.

Jesse James turned his head and gave a sharp look behind him.

"It's a sheriff's posse, curse them!" he hissed, between his teeth. "The fools have been on my track since daybreak yesterday. They are twenty strong, but I'll trick them! Jesse James has never been taken yet! Faster, Star King, my boy! It is you who must save me!"

He turned back to his horse as he spoke, but caught the expression of the girl's face, as she turned it up to him.

"Ha! I reckon you didn't know who I was when you asked me to protect you!" he muttered.

"I did not, indeed!"

For just a second he turned the full power of his strange glance upon her.

"You are just as safe with me as you would be in

your mother's arms, my girl," he said, sternly. "Jesse James is a bad man where men are concerned, but no one lives who can say he ever ill-treated a woman!"

There was another shout from the rear, and once more the outlaw glanced over his shoulder.

He was speeding along a narrow path now, with an open space ahead, and the moon doing its best to reveal him to his enemies.

"Halt! Yer can't escape us, Jess!" shouted the sheriff, as he raised a clumsy derringer and sent a bullet before him.

Jesse James made no reply, except a word to his horse. Then he wheeled in his seat, and half-rose from the stirrups.

Crack!

Crack!

Two handsome revolvers were aimed over the girl's shoulders, and a double yell of agony followed.

"I've winged two of the whelps, and there's more left for the others!" muttered the outlaw, between his teeth, as he reloaded his weapons.

Star King was making a record for time that had never been equalled, for the reports of the three weapons seemed to have turned the creature into a demon.

A bullet whistled past the outlaw's ear.

"Lie low, little girl! Don't raise your head!" ordered the outlaw. "The curs will aim high, for fear of hitting you! Ha!"

"We can't go on this way long! The beast will surely give out," said the girl, in a whisper, as she obeyed the order to keep her head as low as possible.

"If Frank had met me, as I expected, we'd have been all right," began the outlaw, with a keen glance ahead. "He was to be at the turn we passed a hundred yards back! Hello! Here he comes now!"

There was another shout, but this time it was

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CHAPTER 212.

THE CLEVERNESS OF FRANK JAMES.

ahead instead of in the rear, and the young girl forgot her caution and raised her head a little. A group of half-a-dozen horsemen were coming over the stretch of level road ahead, while the posse behind seemed to be lagging a little.

At that minute Jesse James raised his massive form from the saddle and sent a taunting cry across the space of a few hundred yards that separated him from his enemies.

"Come on, you hell hounds!"

Wheeling his horse in the open space, he leveled his weapons at the posse, and, before they were in range, Frank James, the bandit's brother, with five desperadoes of the James gang, had drawn their horses into place behind their leader.

It was a thrilling sight.

Jesse James slipped a small-sized revolver into the hands of the girl, and whispered to her to show her courage. What would be the outcome of this seemingly uneven battle no one could know.

Jesse James alone was confident of victory.

The great bandit had faith in his own cleverness and skill; moreover, he had the courage that comes to one who has never been vanquished.

The outlaw knew well that he was the terror of the West, and he was more than satisfied with the unenviable position that he occupied.

He had just succeeded in robbing a bank in Sacramento City, and he chuckled every time he thought of the sum it had netted him.

It was this crime that had set this particular posse on his track, but the detectives were after him for crimes innumerable.

They had been after him for months, and had often cornered him, only to find themselves outwitted at every point.

Now the end seemed in sight.

It would be settled in a minute.

When the sheriff's posse discovered the reinforcements which surrounded their quarry there was a momentary halt and a brief exchange of opinions.

"At them, men, and war to the knife!" ordered Will Star, sternly. "We are three to one, so we are sure to conquer!"

"Ther girl is in the way! Hang it! we can't shoot Jess fer fear of hittin' the wench!" growled Peck Watson.

"I reckon thet thar is eggsactly what Jess was thinkin' of when he took her aboard," spoke up Sam Green, an ex-sheriff from one of the Nevada counties.

"The girl must take her chances! Who is she?" asked another of the riders.

The sheriff cocked his weapon, and moved forward as he answered:

"She's Cut-Throat Peters' gal, Flo," he said, briefly. "The cuss picked her up in front of Peters' shanty! They was fightin' inside an' skeered her, I reckon."

"If thet thar's ther case, go easy, pards!" broke in a cowboy by the name of Kirkham. "She musn't be hurted! Curse Peters! He's a skunk to abuse his own darter!"

"The girl shall be spared, if it is possible," said Star, sternly.

Moving slowly, the posse advanced, expecting every second to be met with a shower of bullets.

A light wind had sprung up, and clouds were drifting across the heavens, while trees, rocks and bushes began casting weird shadows.

"The curs have nerve," muttered Star, as he peered ahead through the semi-darkness, and then the brave detective gripped his weapon a little

tighter, and his teeth were set for a resolute endeavor.

The sheriff moved a little closer and leaned toward his shoulder.

The outlaws were now only fifty yards away, waiting with cocked weapons the approach of their enemies.

"Hello! Reckon thar's a dicker on by the cusses not firin'!" said the sheriff to Star.

The detective promptly took the hint, and called out, briefly:

"Surrender, Jesse James! You can't escape us! We are three to one!"

A loud laugh followed, and Jesse James dropped a trigger.

"Take that, curse you! Ha! ha! ha! you don't know me yet, Will Star, if you think I'll surrender! Come a step nearer, Sheriff Spencer, and I'll plug you so full of lead that the coroner won't know you."

His bullet had grazed the detective's shoulder, making an ugly flesh wound, but the plucky fellow did not even swerve in his saddle.

"One!

"Two!

"Three!

"Fire!"

Star gave the order, and a volley followed.

Outlaws and honest men discharged their weapons together.

The effect was fearful.

Not a horse was left standing, except the magnificent stallion, which had not even been grazed by a bullet.

Groans, cries and curses rose in a confused roar, as the uninjured struggled to regain something like advantageous positions.

Jesse James retreated behind the bodies of two dead horses, which had fallen upon each other, and,

jerking the stallion to its haunches, he used them for breastworks.

Star dropped upon his knees beside his friend, Howard Lent, and, using the chestnut thoroughbred to shield them, they once more leveled their weapons.

The moon disappeared behind another cloud, and there was a momentary lull in the battle.

It gave each an opportunity to reload his weapon and draw breath for the final volley.

Suddenly, a girl's slight form dashed between the combatants.

Jesse James roared out a curse and demanded her return, but Flo Peters had found the proper moment in which to show her courage.

Standing half-way between the two, she raised one hand to Heaven as if to add force to the prayer she was about to utter.

"Stop! stop! I pray you to stop!"

"Stand aside!" roared Jesse James, who was white with fury. "Out of the way, you vixen, or you will be filled with bullets!"

"I'm not afraid! As bad as you are, you would not harm me, Jesse James! You told me so yourself."

Flo Peters put her hands to her face, but did not alter her position. Instead, she began rocking her body to and fro in a desperate motion.

There was no such thing as firing now, and Will Star caught a suspicious movement among the outlaws, which showed him that Jesse James was preparing to leave them.

One mad dash of the stallion would set his master free, if, with his accustomed good luck, he evaded their bullets.

There was not a horse in the posse that was fit to follow.

The victory must be now or never, as the chase was ended.

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"Out of range or I'll fire, Flora Peters!" he called, sternly, without the faintest notion of making good his promise.

"Curse you! raise your weapon and I'll brain yer," snarled some one in his ear.

Star did not have to turn to recognize the girl's lover, for such was Kirkham.

"Don't be a fool, man! The girl must move!" said Star, in a low voice. "See! Jess is off already, and all for her tomfoolery! Hang the girl! She's lost us our bird and ten thousand dollars!"

He sprang to his feet as he spoke, and the balance of the posse followed suit.

Their weapons cracked simultaneously, but only a hoarse laugh answered them.

Jesse James had made a dash exactly as the detective expected, while the girl was taking up the attention of his enemies.

Another well-directed volley from the outlaws followed, and Flo Peters fell to the ground.

She had been hit by a stray bullet.

With a growl of rage, Kirkham started toward her.

He picked the girl up in his arms, and carried her back behind the horses.

Howard Lent dropped back behind the pile of horses.

He was a brave detective, but a little too impulsive.

"We've got to do something, partners. Jesse will be back soon!" said the stern-faced man, who was a merchant from Placerville. "Our play is to go back. We'll get after them again as soon as we get horses!"

"You are right, Mr. Day," spoke up Star, who had finished bandaging the girl's arm, and who felt reasonably sure that she was reviving.

Star strained his eyes toward the spot where his

enemies were concealed, and as the moon flashed out its brightest rays, he could dimly outline a rider in the distance.

"Quick, men!" he said, sharply. "Jess is coming back."

He glanced around as he spoke.

Three men lay dead at his feet, and seven more were groaning.

There was nothing to be done. They would have to leave them.

Taking the girl tenderly in his arms, the detective led the way, and, after a moment of hesitancy, the balance of the posse followed him.

It was a humiliating ending to what had looked to be an easy victory, but every man of them believed he was acting wisely.

Howard Lent brought up the rear of the solemn party, and, as he fell in behind Kirkham, he glanced back over his shoulder.

Frank James was standing erect.

Beside him knelt a man whom the detective knew to be Buck Bolton.

He strained his eyes to see more, but only these two were visible.

Frank James was the only man in the gang who had escaped uninjured.

A second later and the truth flashed over his brain. "Halt!"

Lent gave the order sharply, and then bit his lips with vexation.

"What is it? Are they aiming in our direction?" called out Star, over his shoulder.

Kirkham turned his head at that minute, and the same thought must have flashed into his mind, for he suddenly raised his weapon and took aim at the outlaw.

As quick as lightning, Lent struck his arm a blow,

then gave the cowboy a cuff on the ear that almost unseated him.

"It's all right! Forward and faster, men!" said the detective, coolly. "This fellow here was going to shoot behind him. He'll know better another time than to play the traitor!"

The posse hurried after that and were soon out of sight of the battle ground.

At the summit of each knoll they looked back over their shoulders.

As they started on again, there was not much said until Peters' shanty was sighted.

Star and Lent were particularly depressed over the situation.

The James boys had once more outdone them in cleverness.

It was a state of affairs that was becoming monotonous.

Taking advantage of the darkness, Kirkham slunk away into the bushes.

He was cursing the two detectives inwardly, and praying for revenge.

Jesse James himself did not hate them at that moment more bitterly than he did.

CHAPTER 213.

A FREE FIGHT.

"What's wanted?"

These words were growled at Star as he pounded on the door with the butt of his revolver.

"Open the door and I'll tell you," was the detective's answer.

There was no reply, and the posse listened intently.

"We're bagged, pards. Ther gal has called ther sheriff!" said a low voice in the shanty.

"Plug ther cuss full of lead, if he tries to come in!" said another voice.

"I reckon we've got ther advantage!"

Star raised his weapon and hit the door another blow.

His efforts were answered by another question:

"Who be ye, strangers? This hyar ain't no public house. Speak yer names, ther hull lot of yer, or go on about yer bizness!"

"Open the door, or we'll break it in, Hank Peters!" ordered Mr. Day. "There's men inside that we want to look at, and you know the law against harboring such people."

"Thar ain't no one hyar thet answers to thet description," began Peters, when Star placed his shoulder against the door.

It fell with a crash, and the four men inside had hardly dodged it when they found themselves covered by the posse's revolvers.

"By thunder! Hold on, men!" began Star, as he took a quick look at the four men in the light of a tallow candle.

A quick signal from one of them made him relapse promptly into silence.

"It's the James gang!" spoke up Lent; "at least that fellow is one of them, and I think this dwarf is another!"

He pointed his weapon at two of the inmates as he spoke.

The first was an ugly-looking half-breed, who was seated on a table, and the other was a fellow with slim legs and prodigious head and shoulders.

"I reckon yer right, pardner! Now, Hank Peters, what hev yer got t' say fer yerself?" asked the sheriff, sternly. "This hyar's yer own darter thet yer've nigh scared t' death! What be ye thinkin' erbout ter abuse ther gal an' then take up with these suspicious characters?"

Peters was facing the sheriff's weapon, so he did his best to explain, while Peck Watson deposited

Flora on a wooden bench, and administered a little more whisky.

"They give out they was from ther Comstock lode, an' stopped fer a leetle game," said Peters, waving his hand at his guests. "I 'low thar warn't no harm in thet, sheriff! As fer ther gal, thar warn't no one plaguin' her!"

"We was chuckin' dice in ther backroom," said the dwarf, with a keen glance along the barrel of Howard Lent's revolver. "Thar hedn't nobody said a word t' ther gal, 'ceptin' it was ther tenderfoot yonder!"

He motioned toward the fellow whom Star was carefully covering, and something in his face set both detectives thinking.

"I'll march ther hull lot on yer to jail, just the same," began the sheriff, when Star interrupted.

"If you do we'll lose Jesse for good! Take their weapons, sheriff, and then leave some one to watch them. We've got to be making tracks for Placerville for horses!"

"Was yer after Jesse James?" spoke up the half-breed, quickly.

"We was, stranger! Hev yer any interest in that?" asked the sheriff, with a sharp look.

"I told you they were members of Jesse James' gang, sheriff. Better nab them while you can!" said Lent, decidedly.

"Thet settles it! Throw up your hands, the hull lot of yer!" ordered the sheriff, promptly. "Now, then, one of yer go through 'em an' take their weapons!"

Howard Lent stepped forward and examined Peters.

The fellow was unarmed, but a pair of good revolvers lay near him on the table.

The dwarf came next, and here Lent obtained a small-sized arsenal.

The fellow carried an ugly-looking dirk, a bowie-knife and three revolvers.

The half-breed came next, and the fellow was inclined to be ugly.

Only the snap of a trigger under his nose kept him from landing an uppercut on the jaw of the detective.

As Lent stepped up to the fourth man he wavered a second, but the fellow promptly drew his only weapon from his belt and handed it to him.

"Hanged if it ain't Davis!" was the thought that flashed through the detective's mind. Then the three, who were brother detectives on the same lay, exchanged glances with each other.

"Reckon they're harmless now, sheriff! I'll stay and watch them, if you say so!" spoke up Star, as Lent distributed the weapons among the posse.

He glanced around the room as he spoke, and then lighted a second candle that he saw lying on the table.

The shanty was a two-roomed affair, the front room being the kitchen or living-room, while he readily conjectured the inner room was for sleeping.

A rude bunk beside the chimney had been made up for Hank Peters, and the remains of their supper was standing on the shelf in the corner.

Star ended his search by a sharp glance at the inner door.

It surprised him to see an inside partition so heavy.

The door leading to Flora's bedroom was more substantial by far than the door by which the posse had entered.

Ten minutes later the scene had changed considerably.

The sheriff and three men were on their way back to Placerville, leaving Star and Mr. Day in possession of the cabin.

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The balance of the posse were hidden near by in the bushes to be ready in case Jesse James should attack them—a thing that no one really expected would happen.

"We'll have a game while we wait," remarked Mr. Day, drawing a pack of cards from his pocket.

The detectives stared, but accepted the situation.

In the first game Star was clever enough to pass Davis a loaded weapon under the table.

The detective slipped it into his bootleg and went on with the game.

He meant to play the role of desperado a little while longer, and was glad to see that his friend approved of his action.

The hours were beginning to drag when there was a noise outside.

Star walked backward across the room in order to give the men the impression that he was still uneasy, but turned his head when he found himself beside the window.

In a second, the dwarf leaped from his chair and struck out with his long arms, knocking the revolver in Mr. Day's hand to one side, so that a bullet passed through the ceiling.

The half-breed was behind him, and had the merchant by the throat, when a bullet struck his wrist at short range, and made him yell with terror.

Peters attempted to get in a blow, but was kicked into a corner.

Star pulled the trigger of his weapon, but tried so hard to avoid the merchant that he merely grazed the half-breed.

A second later Davis fired, and this time the fellow dropped, but the dwarf made a sudden spring and was at his throat like a bloodhound.

Day was an able-bodied man and fought like a demon, but he stepped in a pool of blood and lost his advantage.

A bullet crashed through the narrow window of the shanty and fanned Star's face as he started to give the merchant some assistance, while another, entering the same way, clipped Davis' false mustache like a pair of scissors.

Some one kicked in the door just then, for it had only been stood up carelessly.

The gust of air blew out the candles, and the room was in darkness.

A second later Star made out the burly form of Frank James, carrying a revolver in his hand.

Frank wheeled almost instantly and cocked his weapon, aiming squarely at Star's head, which was outlined against the window.

Their weapons spoke simultaneously, and both dropped to the floor.

There was a shout, and another figure loomed up in the doorway.

"It's Jess!" thought Star, as he clapped his hand over a bullet hole in his shoulder.

"Ha! Bagged, by thunder!" cried a voice from the outside, and every man in ambush made a rush for the shanty.

The man on the threshold glanced back over his shoulder and took in the situation.

He moved in time to escape a bullet, then stumbled across the room toward the inner door, which he opened like one who was familiar with his surroundings.

Once inside, Star heard him draw a heavy bar across the door; then, as the posse rushed in, he tried to give an order.

"We've got him, boys! Surround the cabin! That's Frank by the door! Take his pistol, some one!"

Crack!

Crack!

Pistols added their noise to the racket of cursing

and shouting; then came the sound of a fall, and the dwarf's savage fight was over.

Some one relighted the candles and held them in the air.

Their light showed the position of every one in the cabin.

Mr. Day was half-lying in a chair, gasping for breath, while Peters still lay like a log in one corner, and the half-breed and the dwarf were piled on top of each other.

Davis leaned against the wall with his weapon still in his hand, and Star was staggering to his feet with one hand on his shoulder.

"They're safe, boys! The rascals are bagged!" yelled Peck Watson, as he gave an anxious glance at the wooden bench, where, an hour or so before, he had left Flora.

The girl was not there, and he did not look any farther, for both Star and the sheriff's men were shouting orders.

"He's inside! I reckon it's Jess, all right! He knows ther shanty!" yelled one of the cowboys.

There was a clatter of hoofs, and the posse came up, giving a shout of victory when they heard that Jesse was in the shanty.

"Lynch the rascal!" yelled one.

"Burn him at the stake! Hanging's too good for him!" howled another.

"Better go easy, boys! He ain't caught yet! Take care of the fust one, 'fore ye brag of t'other! Frank's comin' to! Put a rope around him, pardners!"

Frank was dragged to one side, and his hands bound together; then Howard Lent turned doctor and looked after his injuries.

In the confusion that followed some one crept to his side.

It was the girl, Flora Peters.

Davis and the sheriff were guarding the door, the latter giving orders at the same time to the rest of the posse.

"Take a look at the cellar, men! You, Nick Crowe, go up on the roof and keep a bead on the chimney! Jess can't get away from me this time!" he howled, while Star's voice could be heard outside repeating the orders.

Lent left Frank James to Flora after he had bandaged his wound, then turned his attention upon securing the other prisoners.

"Reckon yer'd best drag 'em t' one side, so's they won't be in the way," said the sheriff, complacently. "Thars three on em safe, t' say nothin' of Peters! Thar'll be another in erbout er minute."

"Open this door, sheriff!" called out Lent. "I'll go first. Some one has got to be the victim, and I can be spared as well as any one!"

"I reckon I've got something to say about that!" spoke up Davis, promptly. "I've got no wife, and you have, old man! I'll open that door, sheriff!"

The detective grabbed Lent by the shoulder and swung him to one side as he poke, then he knocked on the door to try the strength of the timbers.

Lent turned back and saw Flora standing as white as a corpse with her eyes fixed on Davis.

He put his arms around her and half-carried her to a place of safety.

"Open the door, Jess! We're coming in, and you may as well surrender!" called Davis, sternly. "We're twenty to one, and there's a dozen more coming."

There was a minute's silence, and then something astonishing happened.

A dozen men had crowded into the shanty, and had their weapons aimed at the door, when the bar was slid back. Just then their prisoner inside let out a roar of laughter.

"Haw! haw! Sold ag'in, strangers! I reckon these hyar togs of Jesse's fooled yer! Ther cap'n's fifty miles away by this time, I reckon! Yer kin hev me an' welcome, if yer want me, strangers! A man with a broken arm can't make much show at fightin'!"

"Snakes an' crockodiles! It's Buck Bolton!" growled the sheriff, disappointedly. "Curse the bloody robber! He's escaped us, pardners!"

The words produced a terrible effect.

Even Mr. Day staggered to his feet when he heard that Jesse James was not a prisoner.

It was such a bitter disappointment that it fairly restored him to his senses and set him to venting his wrath with the others.

CHAPTER 214.

PRISONERS.

Confusion followed this discovery, but Lent brought order out of chaos.

He made a quick leap and disarmed the tricky outlaw, then closed the door on him and turned the key in the padlock.

"There's no time to waste, boys! Jess has escaped us," he said, briefly. Tie those other rascals hand and foot, and nail the door up, sheriff! They'll keep till we get back, and I'm for going on now."

Lent's orders were carried out up to the nailing of the door.

The entire posse left the shanty and were grouped around the door.

Suddenly there came the faintest shout possible from the direction of the recent battle.

The sheriff made a jump for his horse as he spoke, and the rest of the posse followed him.

Lent and Star were already in the saddle.

Davis had been persuaded to stay behind, for the

rascals needed watching, and, besides, some one had to protect the girl.

"Come on, sheriff," said Star.

There was a simultaneous movement, and the posse dashed off.

The night had grown so dark now that they were promptly lost sight of.

Davis took a look into the shanty and found that his prisoners were all right.

Peters had come to himself and was glaring about him, while Frank James was propped up against the wall with his face as grim as a statue.

The half-breed leaned against a chair with an ugly scowl upon his face, and the detective saw instantly that the fellow was plotting mischief.

He turned to the dwarf, and at that second one of the candles flickered and went out.

The other one followed suit a minute later, and Davis drew a match from his vest pocket and lighted it cautiously.

Miss Peters held the two candles and they were soon ablaze, but in that brief period of time the dwarf had accomplished something.

With his hideous yellow teeth he had gnawed the string around his wrists, and was just reaching for the chair against which the half-breed was leaning.

"Look out!" yelled Davis, as the fellow's long fingers reached the chair leg.

The half-breed straightened himself up and a grin distorted his features.

Miss Peters jumped, and Davis made a dash for the chair.

In a second, the dwarf was on his feet, his bonds falling beside him, and holding the chair as a shield in front of him.

Davis jerked his pistol from his belt and snapped the trigger.

There was no report.

He had emptied the weapon in the excitement.

For the next five minutes he was kept more than busy, for the dwarf swung the chair around his head, and more than once Davis got a blow that nearly knocked him senseless.

He was cornered at last, and in despair of his life, when Miss Peters suddenly sprang at the fellow and threw something into his face.

Davis ducked under the chair, and was once more at liberty, and as the dwarf emitted a howl of pain he managed to get in a right-hander.

"Ha! Well done! The girl's plucky!" said a voice, and the detective turned and saw Jesse James standing in the doorway.

This time there was no mistaking the dashing outlaw.

Any one who had ever seen him before would have known his face, for the light from the two candles fell full upon his features.

Davis saw the pistol barrel aimed squarely at his head, but, after the first thrill of horror his courage came back to him.

"That was a novel battle," went on the outlaw, without moving from the door. "Humpy put up a good fight, but the pepper was too much for him!"

"What are you here for, Jesse James?" said Davis, calmly.

"Hand me his weapon, my beauty! It's no use to him if it's empty," ordered the outlaw, grimly.

"Never! I won't do it, Jesse James!"

The girl spoke firmly, but there were tears in her eyes.

She had emptied a pepper-box into her hand and gotten the worst of it herself.

"I'll give you till I count ten to hand me that pop," went on the outlaw, sternly. "You'd better do as I say, or it'll be the worse for you, my girl!"

"You said you never harmed women! You are a coward, Jesse James!" burst out Flora, furiously.

"You'd better do it, Miss Flora! The weapon is of no use as it is! I was a fool not to reload it," began the detective, bitterly.

"I won't do it!" cried the girl, defiantly. "If he wants it, let him take it! I'll never give it to him!"

"Then I will!"

At the risk of his life, the detective jerked the pistol from his belt and tossed it to the outlaw.

Jesse James caught it cleverly and tucked it in his belt.

"Now, open that door," ordered the outlaw, still without changing his position.

Davis opened the door, and Buck Bolton promptly appeared.

He was bound hand and foot, but was crawling on his knees and elbows.

"Cut him free!"

Jesse James roared the order, and Davis obeyed, but there was a light in his eyes that showed he was desperate.

The outlaw's orders would not be obeyed much longer.

At that moment he argued that discretion was the better part of valor.

"Now, then, Buck, it's your turn, I reckon," said Jesse James, grimly. "Bind 'em hand and foot—the two of 'em together!"

Flora gave a shriek at this and sprang to one side, but in a second Buck Bolton reached out and grabbed her by the shoulder.

Davis doubled his fists and made a quick movement, but was stopped by a bullet cutting the air an inch ahead of him.

"Stand aside! It's my turn!" chuckled the outlaw, grimly. "I'm going to give you and the beauty here a chance to get better acquainted! Take my

lariat, Buck, and make a good job of it, but don't hurt the girl any more than is necessary."

When Buck Bolton had done so, Jesse James moved forward, for he had caught the sound of faint cheering, just as Buck forced the two prisoners into the inner room and closed and locked the door behind him.

Flora's wrist was bound to the detective's, and in such a way that neither could by any possibility undo the bonds.

There was a cot in the room, and both sank down upon it, listening with bated breath to the outlaw's next movements.

"There they go! He has taken them all with him!" whispered Flora, as she heard the outlaws leave the shanty. "Oh, why don't the men hurry! They might catch him if they hurried!"

There was a clatter of hoofs and all was still for fully a minute.

Davis tried to control his chagrin in order not to distress his fair companion.

"They must have defeated the rascals, or they wouldn't yell so," whispered Flora, again, as they caught another faint shout, apparently from the posse.

"I wonder why Jesse James didn't kill me. He must have known I was a detective," said Davis, after a pause.

Flora turned and stared at him with a surprised light in her eyes. It had not even entered her head that her companion and defender was a Pinkerton detective.

"Perhaps my get up fooled him," went on Davis, quietly. "I adopted these clothes in order to be taken for a robber or horse thief of some sort. I reckon Jess was too busy with other things to give me much thought. He probably took me for one of the sheriff's posse."

"I'm glad he did! Very glad!" whispered the young girl, softly.

It was too dark in the room to see her face, but her eyes were shining like stars as Davis leaned toward her.

"Do you mean that you are glad he didn't kill me?" he asked, very tenderly.

"Why, yes; you are so young, you know, and so—so——"

In spite of his mystifying position, the detective smiled.

It is doubtful what would have happened next if the two prisoners had not heard a loud shout outside that told them their friends were coming.

Bending forward, however, Davis found Flora's lips so near his own that he could not resist the temptation to kiss her.

"Jesse James has done one good deed, anyhow," he said, softly. "He's bound me to the sweetest little girl in the West! You must tell me something, little girl!"

"They're coming! Oh, sir! I'm—I'm afraid I've done wrong——" began the young girl, timidly.

"Nonsense! You've done exactly what any sensible girl would do!"

Just then there was a chorus of yells, and the sheriff's posse was once more in the shanty.

Their cries of victory were silenced instantly as they looked about them.

"Here we are, sheriff!" cried Davis, who felt that he had suddenly come back to earth. "We've had a visit from Jess, and this is the outcome! He's taken his men and gone, and Flora and I are prisoners!"

The door flew open with a crash, and the men swarmed in.

There was a babel of voices all trying to fathom the mystery.

"Why, we've licked Jess and a dozen of his men out yonder! Got our own dead and wounded and six of the scoundrels!" roared the sheriff, on hearing Davis' story.

"Jess is dead! We've left him out yonder, fer we didn't hev no horses t' spare," added Peck Watson, with a trace of horror in his voice.

"Thunder! Is it possible we've been tricked again?" said Star, disgustedly. "Why, the cusses had robbed our dead and were abusing our injured! We gave them a hard fight, and killed every one of them!"

"You didn't kill Jess! He was here ten minutes ago!" said Davis, bitterly. "Why, look around you if you don't believe it! You don't suppose I'd let these four rascals go, do you?"

"He's right! We've been tricked again, boys," said Lent, hopelessly. "Jess must have planned that fracas yonder in order to save his brother!"

Star had cut the two loose, then the posse settled down again to more serious business.

CHAPTER 215.

THE CHASE.

Jesse James had eluded them and covered his tracks skillfully, that was certain. It wa too dark to think of tracing him across the mountains except by the aid of a pack of bloodhounds. This the detectives did not wish to do.

They had used dogs before and always found them a disadvantage. The only thing left was to go back to Placeville, lodge Miss Peters safely, and call a meeting of the citizens.

This was done, and at daybreak a plan to capture the famous bandit had been arranged, and the natives for miles around were watching breathlessly the outcome.

Dogs were used to get the trail, and then the posse divided.

The sheriff, with ten men, struck east into the mountains, while Star, with Lent and Davis and three other men, moved directly north, thinking the outlaw might have swerved to the west at some point above Coloma.

"You'll wait for me here," Davis said to Flora when they parted, for the detective had formed an attachment for the girl. Flora was quartered with the mayor of Placerville, and felt as secure as possible.

"I'll be here, and I'll think of you every minute. But you must catch Jesse James."

"That settles it! I'll trap the scoundrel for your sake alone, sweetheart!" cried the detective, gallantly.

Starr and Lent looked on and sympathized deeply.

They had both won their wives while chasing Jesse James, so they naturally had a fellow-feeling for Davis. Whether the young man would make good his words remained to be seen. Others had sworn to kill the bandit, but the feat seemed impossible. Jesse James was growing more desperate and dangerous yearly, and there was nothing to indicate his speedy capture.

At the end of twenty-four hours nothing had been accomplished, and the two sections of the posse had lost track of each other.

Star was following the hoof-prints of some noble animal that every man in his party took to be the stallion.

"There's four others with him! Look there!" said Star, suddenly, as he pointed to a bit of soft ground.

The others crowded around and examined the tracks closely. They were unmistakably the hoof-prints of the stallion and four bronchos, who had

reached the spot by walking single file almost in each other's footsteps.

"Jesse must have had horses for his men! That fellow is a wonder," remarked Mr. Day, who happened to be one of the detectives' party.

"There's four of his men in the Placerville jail and two in the graveyard," spoke up Peek Watson. "That thar warn't a bad night's work, pardners."

"Thar's four of our men along with them in the graveyard, Mr. Star," remarked Snipe Landers.

Lent and Davis had been consulting a compass, and now checked their horses.

The mountains towered on the right, and a stretch of level country greeted them on the left.

The two detectives examined the landscape in both directions and then glanced again at the hoof-prints.

"There's a trick here, old man!" said Davis to Star. "Jess has stopped at this point. He hasn't passed a foot beyond this chaparral!"

He pointed to a dense growth of bushes, and the merchant promptly urged his horse in that direction.

Within a few feet of the bushes the horse shied violently.

Mr. Day jerked a revolver from his belt, cocked it, and then drove his spurs home, making the animal rear suddenly.

This act was all that saved his life.

There was the report of a weapon, and his horse fell, with a bullet in its heart.

In a second Star gave the order to surround the bushes.

Peek Watson dropped the trigger of his pistol.

There was a howl of pain, and "Cut-Throat" Peters stood up in the bushes.

"Don't shoot!" said the fellow, sullenly. "Jess chucked me in hyar, knowin' I was bleedin' to death."

"Ha! Just hear the fool!" roared Peek, who was holding him by the collar.

"Watch out, man! There may be others near!" said Star, as he approached the fellow. "So Jess dropped you, did he? Let me see your wound! There wasn't a bullet hole in you when you left the shanty!"

Peters took his left arm in his right hand and held it up.

Blood was dripping from his fingers, and the bone was broken.

Lent slipped from his saddle and applied a tourniquet, which he improvised out of a handkerchief and a stick, and then gave the fellow a drink of whisky.

Five minutes later he was in possession of valuable information. Peters told them the bandit's plans as far as he knew them.

The famous robber meant to wreck a stage that night at sundown and empty the coffers of the bank at Nevada City the next morning.

"These two jobs were right in his way, I reckon," said Peters, growing amiable from the whisky. "An' bein' as how you've treated me fair, I ain't above tellin' ye ther full pertickelars!"

"I reckon we'd best stop the fellow's mouth, pardners," said Peek Watson, when he had finished. "He's played traitor to Jess, so thar's no depending on him."

"We'll take him along as far as the gap," spoke up Mr. Day. "There's a shanty there. We can lock him in and we can tell the sheriff where to find him later!"

"Whoop! Hello! There's Bat Lynn!" yelled Watson, suddenly. "He's cut loose from the sheriff and is bringing a dog with him!"

A horse was galloping over the hills, and Bat Lynn waved his hat and shouted a greeting as he approached them.

"Hurrah! This hyar's luck! I 'lowed I'd run afoul of ye about hyar!" he cried, when he was near enough. The sheriff's horses hev all been stole, an' Jess is layin' fer the stage coach! Git a move on, men, and foller me down ther valley!"

"That settles it, men! We must leave Peters behind!" said Davis, decidedly.

Peters began to beg, but the men thundered on, leaving him forty miles from Placerville with a broken arm for company.

Bat Lynn urged his horse down the slope, with the others at his heels, and explained what had happened in characteristic sentences.

"We was restin' a bit, an' had cooked a bite of venison, when ther James Boys fired on us from behind the bushes. Thar warn't a sign of ther rascals within a mile of ther place, and ther sheriff hed jest said we was off of the trail altogether."

"How far did the tracks go?" asked Star, who was abreast of him.

"Ther was ther prints of ther stallion as fur as ther Injun Creek! We lost 'em thar, an' thought they'd took ter ther water! Which way they went was a guess, but I reckon we hit it! The cusses left their hosses in ther stream and sneaked thro' the bushes like lizards! Thar warn't a sound till we felt the bullets!"

"Where is the sheriff now?" asked Mr. Day, anxiously.

"Gone back to Placerville fer help," was the answer. "He and I was ther only ones left. The rest air nursin' bullet wounds. I bolted, an' I reckon Jess has vamoosed with ther hosses."

Star set his teeth and increased his speed a little, and five minutes later they reached the level. Here there was a fairly good road which zig-zagged up the hill and lost itself a thousand feet above in a cut between two mountains.

Bringing his horse to a standstill, Bat Lynn raised himself in his stirrups and took a good look over the surrounding country.

"The stage has got t' pass hyar, boys," he said, after a minute. "Jess'll lay fer it above in ther Wind Gap, I reckon! What do you say to our holdin' the caboose up fust?"

Every one laughed, and Star responded to the suggestion.

"The driver will be glad to see us at any rate. It will be a good one on Jess to run up against a coach load of his enemies!"

"Then that's agreed," said the merchant, slipping from his saddle. "Now, let's have a bite, boys, and then rest till sundown. We've got a hard job before us, so we may as well get ready for it."

Bat Lynn tethered the horses where they could feed with ease, and Peek Watson made a fire and got out the canned goods.

Once more out came a pack of cards, and Mr. Day began to shuffle. Danger was made pleasant for him always by a good game of poker.

With the first rumble of the stagecoach the men were in the saddle, and as the lumbering vehicle came in sight Star drew a bead on the driver.

"Halt! Hands up, my friend!" he ordered, in a thunderous voice.

His answer was a report that sounded like a cannon, and the pistol was knocked out of his hand as clean as a whistle.

"Haw! haw! Bill Beans is aboard! He's the dandiest sawed-off shooter in ther hull collection!" yelled Peek Watson. Then he jerked a red bandanna from his pocket and waved it lustily. "Hold up! Hi, thar! What ails yer, Beans? This hyar is er party of tenderfeet, yer Injun!"

"Then what the deuce did he draw a bead on the driver for?" asked the shotgun messenger, calmly.

Lem Henderson, a veteran driver, pulled his mules in easily, then let the express messenger do the talking, while he took a fresh chew of tobacco.

"Any passengers, Beans?" asked Peek, moving toward the coach.

"I'll show you whether there is or not!" called a woman's voice. "I'll blow your head off if you come another step nearer!"

A beautiful young girl stuck her head out of the window and leveled a tiny silver-mounted pistol at the head of the cowboy.

She had heard the rumpus, and supposed the coach had been held up by bandits.

Beans smothered his laughter and leaned over to explain the situation.

"Put up thet thar bean-shooter, miss. These hyar gents ain't robbers! They're just a sheriff's posse. You couldn't well be in safer company!"

"I'm not so sure of that, Mr. Messenger," remarked another handsome woman, as she put her head out of the opposite window.

Star caught a good look at her and turned his head suddenly. A second later both Lent and Davis tried the same manoeuvre.

"Its Mrs. James, by thunder!" muttered Star, under his breath. "We are in for it, boys! That woman is a Tartar!"

"Yer detainin' me, gents! Reckon now I'd best be movin'," said Lem Henderson, indifferently. "Who be yer lookin' fer, anyway, Peek Watson? I low yer on some offishul errand!"

All three of the detectives tried to stop Peek from answering, but the cowboy had not guessed the truth, and blurted out, promptly:

"We're after Jesse James! The rascal is hidin' in the gap yonder! I reckon now thar's somethin' in thet thar box, an' lowed it wouldn't come amiss 't give yer a warnin'!"

There was a little scream from the two women, and then all was still, but the two pretty faces still remained in the windows.

"Consarn it! Glad ye stopped us, Peek! Reckon I'd best load up the 'tother sawed-off," said the messenger, nervously.

Lem Henderson shifted his ribbons to the left hand and drew a bulldog from his pocket.

"Thar's thirty thousand in thet box, an' I don't mean t' lose it," he said, grimly. "I've been drivin' on this route fer twenty year, an' this hyar's the closest I ever come ter a hold-up."

"Nonsense, Mr. Henderson! I don't believe there are any bandits!" cried the outlaw's wife, firmly. "These fellows are only trying to frighten us! Send them about their business and go ahead, driver. It is imperative that I should be at Nevada City by noon to-morrow."

"Wants to meet her husband!" muttered Star to Lent. "That is proof that Peters wasn't lying to us! Jess means to rob that bank!"

"We'll keep you company, Lem Henderson," spoke up Mr. Day. "It is true that Jess is ahead, and we are after the fellow. There were murders enough at his door before he came to this section, but he's increased the list——"

There was a stifled cry from the two women, and Mrs. James interrupted him.

"And you say he is ahead waiting for the stage? If that is the case, do protect us, I implore you! I will give you five hundred dollars apiece for those two chestnut bronchos!"

She pointed to the animals that Star and Lent were riding as she spoke, and the detectives smiled at her good taste in horseflesh.

"What do you want of the horses, madam?" asked Mr. Day, curiously. He had no idea who she was,

and there was no opportunity for the detectives to tell him.

"I could take my ward and ride across the hills to a ranch that I know of."

In spite of himself, Star could not help a burst of laughter. In a second Mrs. James gave him a look that revealed to her his identity. A thundercloud could not have been blacker than the frown which crossed her features.

Star saw that the secret was out, so he turned and faced the driver, while Mrs. James drew her head back, but kept her ear at the window.

"Put our horses on the team in some shape, driver!" he said, in a decided voice. "We'll go on with you. There's room inside for two of us, and the rest can ride on top! I fancy that our pistols may be needed in the next ten minutes!"

Lem dropped to the ground and Star told him who his passengers were. The old driver's face grew pale, but he harnessed in the horses, showing great ingenuity in making the connections with rope and lariats. Star approached the door of the coach, keeping out of range of the window.

"Now, then, Mrs. James, please drop that little plaything of yours out of the window!" he ordered, sternly. "If you refuse I shall forget that you are a woman. This is a serious matter, and I don't mean to be trifled with!"

There was a moment of silence, and the sound of a sob, then the silver-mounted revolver was dropped out of the window.

"Is that your only weapon, madam?" asked the detective, sternly.

A graceful head was once more put out of the window, and Star saw the young girl's blue eyes turned eagerly upon him.

"That is all we have, sir. We are now unarmed. I

mean it!" she said, excitedly. "Oh, sir, I didn't dream she was Mrs. James! I beg you to come in and protect me from her! I am in her care only for this journey. I should die with fright if Jesse James ever looked in at this window!"

A mocking laugh followed this impulsive speech, and as Star threw open the coach door Mrs. James turned her back upon him.

"Drive on!" ordered Lent, as he got in and closed the door. The others were on top, and the coach rattled away.

Jesse James little dreamed of the arsenal it carried.

He would have met his defeat, and with his wife as a witness, had it not been for the fact that a traitor aided him.

This traitor was best known to all concerned as the cowboy, Kirkham.

CHAPTER 216.

THE DOUBLE TRAIL.

When Kirkham hid in the bushes that night near "Cut-Throat" Peters' shanty, he was meaning to get even with the detectives.

Ten minutes after his mind was made up he was making his way back to the spot where he had left Frank James, and had told the outlaw what he knew of the posse's intentions. When the second fight occurred Kirkham turned his weapon upon his own townsmen and then made his way back to Placerville, where he remained in hiding until the two divisions of the posse started. The next day he overtook Jesse James in the mountains and swore to the oath of the James gang.

He was one of a group of five who waited for the stage, and it was his intention to kill Will Star for having mocked his affection for the pretty Flora.

"I reckon they've overhauled the old tub, Jess,"

he muttered, as he leaned near the outlaw in the shadow of a pile of boulders.

"My wife will find a way to let me know if they have," said the outlaw, proudly. "She's aboard the coach. Keep your eye peeled for a white handkerchief, boys! If one flutters from the window we'll give up the job! We're in no condition to fight a sheriff's posse."

He looked at his belt as he spoke. There were only two cartridges left besides the six that were already in his weapons.

Frank James was nursing a wounded arm and looking as white as a ghost, but he was behind another pile of rocks sitting erect in his saddle. Coyote Jim was near him, with the dwarf at his side.

They had secreted themselves upon the opposite side of the path, with orders to shoot the leaders the minute they appeared at the top of the long incline.

The sun dropped below the horizon just as the earth began to tremble with the approach of the stage. Then Lem Henderson's cheery shout could be heard distinctly.

"Be ready for the mules! Drop them properly, boys!" ordered Jesse James, softly. "A bullet behind their ears will do the trick, and we've none to waste on a second trial!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when the leaders appeared.

Jesse James gasped in astonishment, and then roared another order:

"Hold on! Don't shoot the horses! We may need them. Put your bullets into the donkeys and——"

"Quick, Jess! There's the handkerchief!" warned Kirkham, as he caught the flutter of something white.

There were reports from two weapons before Jesse James could countermand his order.

The first pair of mules dropped dead in their tracks,

leaving the balance of the strange team rearing, plunging, and snorting.

Jesse James saw at once that he could not retreat.

His men had fired too quick, and the battle was on.

In a second his blood was up and he was ready for the scrimmage. Reining his horse out into the road, he thundered an order:

"Halt! Another step and you are a dead man, Lem Henderson! Drop that gun, Bill Beans, or I'll let daylight through you!"

There was a volley of shots poured from the top of the stage coach, but although the outlaw's shoulder was grazed and his hat brim cut away, he sat as calmly as ever, with his finger upon his weapon.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Coyote Jim and the dwarf were peppering the stage ambush, and as the detective rested his weapon on the messenger's shoulder to steady his aim a bullet struck his wrist and sent the pistol spinning.

As quick as a flash Davis jerked another weapon from his belt and, using his left hand, sent a bullet behind him.

A yell of pain followed, and the horse that the dwarf had been riding galloped down the road riderless. Once more the men on the top of the coach poured a broadside from their weapons, and this time Jesse James reeled for a second in his saddle.

"They've hit Jess! At 'em, Kirkham!" yelled Frank James.

Two more reports followed, and the shotgun messenger pitched from his high seat.

A second later the lines were cut in two, and Lem Henderson was left with six inches of leather in one hand and the useless butt of a bulldog revolver in the other.

"There's too many of the cusses! They're goin' t' win out, pard," gasped Henderson, as another bullet struck him squarely in the heart and ended his career forever.

Davis had jumped to the ground, and Star and Lent were out of the coach.

They thought they were hemmed in by the outlaws, as shots had come from three directions.

Mr. Day and Bat Lynn stuck to their places on top of the stage, only crouching behind the seats, while Peek Watson attempted, with great coolness, to control the frightened animals, but fell a minute later. After the third round from the outlaws only two horses remained. They were the two chestnut thoroughbreds that had been doing duty as leaders.

"Surrender!" shouted Jesse James, who was mad with the pain from a bullet wound in his shoulder.

"Never!" roared back Star, as he crouched behind the coach and tried to get a bead on the outlaw through the window.

"Then I'll riddle you!" shouted Jesse James, savagely.

"No! No! Don't fire at the coach! I am here, Jess!" shrieked Mrs. James, shrilly. "The scoundrels have bound me, hand and foot! I threw my handkerchief out, Jess! Why didn't you see it?"

Frank James and Kirkham had reached the roadway by this time, and the detectives began to hope that this was the number of their opponents.

"Fire! Clean 'em off on top first!" was the outlaw's only answer, and a couple of bullets struck the seats on the top of the coach just as Bat Lynn dropped down beside the detectives.

"They've killed Day, I reckon. Anyhow, a bullet struck him. Let 'em have it, boys! All together through the window!"

Bat Lynn raised his weapon to the glass in the back of the vehicle as he spoke and smashed it in with a quick blow of the weapon.

The vehicle had swung a little, so that a range could be gotten through one of the windows, if Mrs. James had not stood up in the coach so that her head obstructed his vision.

"If you shoot you will kill me first, you cur!" she said, sharply. Lynn jumped out into the roadway to get a bead on Jesse James. "Take that, you sinner!"

He emptied his revolver as he spoke, and the outlaw's stallion reared and leaped into the air. The next second Bat went down in the dirt with a bullet in both legs.

The two missiles had come straight from Frank James' weapon.

"All depends on us, Lent! Let 'em have it, Davis!" yelled Star, and the three detectives made a dash around the coach and fired together. Kirkham's horse dropped under him, but the fellow was unharmed. As he landed on his feet he fired the last cartridge in his weapon.

Jesse James had put the coach between himself and the detectives, and was backing away toward the pile of boulders.

The detectives reloaded their weapons, expecting every minute would be their last, but there was not so much as a trigger pulled by the outlaws.

"They've used up their bullets," said Star, suddenly. "Hurrah! The victory is ours, boys. Get after the robbers!"

He dashed ahead as he spoke and raised his weapon.

Frank James swung a knife around his head, and the keen blade whizzed past his face.

It disconcerted his aim, and Jesse James made a dash down the road, lying flat on his horse, like an Indian. Lent's bullet grazed his back, and Davis sent a rain of leaden hail after the stallion, but the bandit still kept on as though he bore a charmed existence.

The battle was over, when Kirkham bolted for the bushes, and the three detectives were left staring at each other.

They had a horse apiece, and the express box was safe, but the brave fellows knew that this was only a respite.

Jesse James was not the man to leave his wife long in that predicament.

Furthermore, he was too thoroughly a thief not to make another attempt at the money.

The detectives acted promptly and with their wits about them. Lent and Star mounted the thoroughbreds, while Davis caught the dwarf's horse and vaulted into the saddle.

Then the three backed up against the coach, with their weapons in their hands.

They meant to wait there until doomsday, if necessary, and to be ready for what they knew was to follow. Star put his face to the window of the coach after a while.

He had not given much thought to his fair prisoners during the excitement of the scrimmage.

"If you ladies have the nerve, there is work for you to do," he said, calmly. "Men are wounded and dying, and we dare not attend to them. Jesse James may come back at any minute!"

"I am bound, hand and foot, as you well know," answered Mrs. James, haughtily. "Unbind me, and I will do what I can! No one shall say that I was unmerciful either to friend or enemy."

She raised her hands as she spoke, and Star loosened the necktie that he had bound around her wrists a second after she tossed her handkerchief from the window.

Then the young girl put up her hands, and the detective loosened them also.

As he did so he gave her a searching glance, in the hope of reading her nature.

A minute later the two were out in the roadway looking after the injured.

They found only one corpse—that was Lem Henderson, the driver.

"Keep an eye on her, Lent! She can shoot like a man," whispered Star, as he saw Mrs. James bend over Bat Lynn and examine his weapon. Lent left his place and rode to her side.

A minute later he was a walking arsenal.

Every weapon in the lot was in his possession.

Mrs. James looked sullen, but she worked on

nervily, showing the young girl how to bandage the wounds with strips torn from her petticoat.

An hour passed, with no sign of the outlaw's return, and all the wounded even were beginning to rally.

Lent allowed the others to act as sentries, while he assisted the ladies and made beds of leaves for the members of his party.

The dwarf was found in an agony of pain, and was made as comfortable as possible in the near vicinity of his enemies.

Darkness was falling rapidly, and the position was growing desperate. The detectives did not care to leave either the injured or the women to seek their own safety, and, besides, they felt a responsibility for the express company's money.

No one was likely to pass that way before noon of the next day.

By dark they were eager for the outlaw gang's return.

It would be better by far than the suspense they were enduring.

Through it all the detectives could not help admiring the courage of the two women.

Both were calm and quiet, but they would not even address a word to them.

Star tried to cheer them up a little, but both were too thoroughly angry and alarmed to even appreciate his efforts.

It was only when the pangs of hunger were coupled with her fear that the young girl allowed her reserve to desert her.

Davis, who was the only unmarried one of the detectives, took her to one side and talked to her as tenderly as a brother. This gentleness brought the tears, and with it her story.

She was the daughter of a miner in Sacramento City, who had known better times, and was thoroughly discouraged. The girl, desiring to help her father, was on her way to Butte County to teach school, and Mrs. James, whom she had known in

Sacramento City as Mrs. Lee, had offered to chaperon her on her lonely journey.

The young girl's horror at learning her chaperon's identity could hardly be told.

Then the holdup of the stagecoach, with its subsequent horrors, had given her a fright that nearly palsied her reason.

Davis consoled her as best he could.

Suddenly he heard a woman's cry echoing up from the valley.

Instantly there came a shout from Lent:

"Quick! To saddle, boys! Some one is shouting!" cried Star. "The ladies must stay with the wounded men while we go to the brow of the hill and see what is coming! That cry sounded familiar! Didn't you think so, Davis?"

Davis was in the saddle before he answered.

"It did sound like Flora," he said.

Another shout came to their ears as Davis spoke.

There was no mistaking the voice of Flora Peters.

"Larry! Larry! Whoop! Where are you, Larry?" came in a shrill birdlike cry.

Putting his hands to his mouth, Davis gave a call, which was echoed by a shout from a party of riders below them somewhere along the stage route.

"Thank God! Help is at hand! Now, if Jess will only stay where he is ten minutes longer!"

A yell from Davis cut short Star's sentence.

The detective had caught his name again, but this time it was called sharply by the young girl, Ada Lyons.

"Quick! He's here! Oh, save me! Save me!" she cried, wildly.

The detectives wheeled and made a dash back over the two hundred feet of ground between them and their wounded.

They were in time to see the figure of Jesse James outlined for a second against the fire that they had built. After that there was a confused rumble of horses, riders and shadows, and a volley of bullets was poured in their direction.

Star landed on his feet with his horse dead under

him, and promptly emptied every chamber of his weapon. There was not a sound from the others. They were lying beside their horses, and the next minute there was a rush of hoofbeats and a hoarse laugh from the outlaw.

CHAPTER 217.

THE DETECTIVE GIVES A WARNING.

When Flora Peters came up, with five men, including the mayor of Placerville, they found Star leaning over Davis, trying to see if his heart was beating. The detective explained what had happened as briefly as possible, and Mr. Gregg, the mayor, began a prompt investigation. Jesse James had disappeared, taking his followers with him. Even the dwarf had mounted to a saddle and galloped away in the darkness.

Ada Lyons was kneeling on the ground, wringing her hands in agony, but Mrs. James had disappeared with her outlaw husband. The mayor's first move was to look for the express box.

It had vanished from its place on the stagecoach, and Jesse James was an even thirty thousand dollars richer.

Star groaned when he heard that he had been outwitted again. As he nursed his companions back to life he muttered threats of vengeance.

The meeting of the two girls would have been amusing under different conditions, but as they both bent over Davis they could only stare at each other.

The night was well advanced before the chase could be resumed, but the mayor was determined to prevent the robbery of the bank the next morning if possible.

Sending part of his men back with the injured in the old stagecoach, he and Star kept on.

They intended to warn the natives of Nevada City, if nothing more, and thus defeat the evil designs of the daring outlaw.

It was a sad sight to see the old coach roll down the hill with its load of wounded men and anxious, frightened women.

Star set his lips hard when he thought of his two friends and the three brave-hearted companions who had faced danger with him.

"Curse that rascal! He must be brought to justice!" he muttered, savagely. "Is there no way of stopping that fellow, mayor? I've followed him for months, and the fiend seems to bear a charmed life, if such a thing is possible!"

"We'll nab him at daylight!" was the mayor's answer. "If Jess stops at Nevada City he is lost! I feel confident that to-morrow will see the last of the fellow."

Star shook his head.

He was almost past being convinced, but his spirits revived when the wearisome ride was over and they had reached a little "shack" on the outskirts of the settlement.

The sun was just showing in the east when they arrived at the door and handed their tired beasts to a sleepy negro.

"You don't remember me, Jem," began the mayor, cautiously. "I'm Bill Gregg, the mayor of Placerville! Reckon you've never been in Placerville, have you?"

"Neber, sah! Ah neber went nowhar since I come frum Mississippi, sah!" responded the colored man promptly.

"Your master will know me! Put the horses in the shed and give them a bite," said the mayor, pleasantly. Then he knocked on the door with the butt of his pistol.

The negro had put his hand on the two bridles, but did not move. He was staring at the mayor with a queer expression on his black features.

"Hold on, mayor! I reckon there's something wrong!" began Star.

The door opened at that minute and, Mayor Gregg gave a jump backward, nearly knocking the detective over.

"Well, Mayor Gregg, what can I do for you?" asked a familiar voice, and the official from Placerville found himself looking down the barrel of Jesse

James' revolver. Star's hand fell to his weapon just as something touched his ear. There was a sharp click and a pistol trigger fell on the empty chamber of the negro's revolver. They were between two fires, but Star had grown reckless.

Making a quick jump to one side, he landed a blow under the negro's ear and sprang into the saddle. There was a flash, and the outlaw's pistol spit a ball in two directions. The mayor dropped to the ground, with a bullet in his temple, while the detective could feel the horse under him quiver.

As quick as thought he had leaped to the other saddle, and the startled horse was off like a cyclone.

A bullet whistled by his ear, and he caught a curse roared after him by the outlaw, but he was out of range in a second and speeding toward the city. Ten minutes later the settlement was up in arms, for Star rode through the main street, shouting:

"To arms! To arms! Jesse James is here! The scoundrel is planning to rob your bank, and is hiding in Phil Freeman's shanty."

The name of Jesse James was sufficient to arouse the town, and soon a mob of nearly two hundred had gathered.

Star showed his badge and then put himself at the head of the crowd, where he was flanked on either side by the highest police officials.

As fast as he could talk he told them what had happened.

When he finished the tale his hearers were like so many madmen, and ropes were promptly added to the supply of firearms.

"We'll hang him in the square. He shall never leave Nevada City alive!" shouted one of the officials.

Men and even women took up the cry, and only the coolest headed could keep their wits about them.

When they learned that the mayor of Placerville had been shot, it was the last strain on their patience, and a rush was made to surround the cabin.

Star saw the danger of this move, and withdrew from the crowd, which overlooked him entirely as soon as it knew his errand.

Two men in the mob separated themselves and joined him.

"Hello! What horse is that?" blurted out Star when he saw them.

One of the men was riding a black stallion that matched the outlaw's beast exactly.

It was a magnificent animal, with a white star in his forehead.

"The horses are brothers! Jess stole Star King from me two years ago," was the angry answer. "I followed him half way from Placerville yesterday and lost the scoundrel. He'll fare hard, I can tell you, if he gets into my clutches."

"Were you alone?" asked Star, who was beginning to solve a mystery.

The fellow shook his head and glanced at his companion.

"There was four on us, stranger! We was on the lookout for Jess, but missed him. We was lyin' low fer reasons of our own, but as you're on the same lay we mout as well be honest. We was hopin' to earn ther government's ten thousand."

Star laughed good-naturedly. These men had no intention of seeing him win the money single-handed, and they shared his suspicions regarding the outlaw's movements.

"I low they'll find the shanty empty," said one of them, as the mob swept down the street.

"An' I 'low thet's eggsactly the condition Jess'll find ther bank in," remarked the other.

"Thar they go! Howlin' like Injuns!" he added, derisively.

"We must get over to the bank, partners, and take our positions!"

This they quickly did.

"Reckon we've called the turn on ther robber," chuckled one of the men, after the three had patrolled the bank building for five minutes. "An' it's lucky we did! Thar ain't a man left! Thet cuss could slip through the crowd and come back as easy as daylight, an' ef we warn't hyar he could jest take his time t' rob the bank, pards."

Star looked up and down the street. There was not a man visible, but a dozen women were clustered together talking over the situation.

"Keep your eyes open, my friends! Jess may fool that crowd!" said Star, as his two companions disappeared around different corners of the building.

"Exactly what I thought, stranger! That's why I came back," called a voice at Star's left.

The detective turned and saw a man on a spavined broncho emerging from a gap in a fence, covered with grapevines.

The detective's hand was on his pistol in a second, but the fellow did not seem to notice the action. He guided the horse over a ditch and then let go of the bridle.

"They're a pack of crazy fools! The villain will get away from 'em sure!" he went on, coolly. "And they say that there's women hidin' in the shanty. Jess had his wife with him, so Sam Tyler told me."

"That's right, stranger," said Star, eying the fellow narrowly, as he saw him draw his hat brim over his eyes with a peculiar motion. Star's eyes flew open and he gripped his revolver.

There was something about that motion that struck him as familiar, and in an instant he knew that one of the James boys was before him.

It was a trying moment for the brave detective, but he managed some way to control his features. It came to him like a flash that he had been tricked again by the outlaws, but he was positive that he had not been mistaken in the identity of the stallion.

By this time his enemy's hand rested upon the butt of an ugly weapon, and Star bit his lips to think he had lost his opportunity. What had become of the two men he did not know.

He would not have turned his head to look for them for a thousand dollars.

Fortunately for him, his horse was backed up to a reasonable distance from the bank building, so there was little danger of their getting behind him, but a shot could be fired at him from either corner of the building.

What added to his discomfiture was a sound inside of the bank. There was no mistaking the noise made first by a hammer and chisel and then the snapping of locks and the slamming of furniture.

Star ground his teeth with mortification, for the fellow on the broncho was beginning to smile at him.

A faint roar from the distance showed that the mob had been cheated, and as yell after yell came from the direction of Freeman's shanty the fellow's smile became wider and wider.

Star became furious at last and drew his weapon. It was done like a flash, but his opponent was quicker.

There was a flash and a crack and the detective's weapon fell from his fingers without his having been so much as scratched by the bullet.

"Ha! Once more I am the winner, Will Star!" said the ruffian, and, raising his left hand, he detached a set of false whiskers.

The face of Jesse James was revealed in an instant in all its cruelty, while the outlaw showed his teeth like a snarling bloodhound.

"This was a clever move on your part," went on the outlaw, coolly. "You know me well, you whelp, but you can't seem to outwit me!"

The outlaw laughed as he adjusted the false beard over his face, and just then Star saw something that set his blood on fire.

A woman was listening behind the vine-covered fence, and the muzzle of a revolver was being pushed stealthily between the foliage. It was a dreadful minute for Star, for he did not know which was to be the victim.

It might be his own enemy who had a bead on his head, and it might be one of the townswomen on the track of the outlaw.

There was nothing to do but await the outcome.

CHAPTER 218.

THE SUCCESS OF THE JAMES BOYS.

In another minute Jesse James began to show nervousness.

He seemed to feel the dangerous position that he

was in, and Star could see that he was having a hard struggle with himself to keep from looking over his shoulder. The suspense was horrible, but the detective never moved.

He looked the outlaw calmly in the eye, without so much as winking, and the hand that rested upon his weapon did not even tremble.

"My God! Why don't she fire?" was the only thought in his mind.

He would almost rather have been shot than endure that agony a minute longer. Another louder shout from the mob showed that they were coming back rapidly, and as their horses thundered into the main street Jesse James gave a shrill whistle.

Instantly the noise in the bank increased and then the outer door slammed.

The next second the two horsemen dashed around the corner of the building.

There was a sharp cracking of pistols and a yell from the woman behind the fence.

Star snapped the trigger of his own weapon simultaneously with the others, and at the same time he felt a stinging pain in his arm and shoulder.

There was a dash of the horses and the detective pitched forward! As he landed in the grapevines across the roadway he caught a confusion of sharply uttered curses and orders. When he came to himself ten minutes later he was lying on the ground, with a mob of yelling people around him. He closed his eyes again the minute he saw them, and was forced to listen silently to their words of eulogy.

"Reckon he was the only one that knew the robber!" cried a woman's voice, and Star knew intuitively that it was the woman with the weapon who had spoken.

"He's a brave fellow. Take him to the hospital, boys! If our men catch the rascals now this detect-

ive will be the means of it. He must have detained Jess some minutes, according to her story."

"Reckon yer right thar, Mister Piper!" cried the woman. "I'd er shot ther thief, only ther trigger was rusty! Ther thing wouldn't go off!"

"He's a brave chap. He did his best for us!" said another voice, and Star felt himself lifted tenderly and placed in a wagon.

The next day the bullet in his shoulder was extracted, and the detective had a fighting chance for recovery.

A week later Lent and Davis, with Miss Peters, arrived at Nevada City. The posse from Placerville had given up the chase, but the detectives reported that the men from Nevada City had driven the outlaw to cover somewhere in the mountains, and were watching day and night for him to attempt to escape them. Star groaned when he thought of some one else gaining such a victory. It was the ambition of his life to capture Jesse James, not only for the financial reward, but for his professional honor.

It was some time before he learned who really robbed the bank.

They were Mrs. James and Frank, who had not been in the shanty at all, but were hiding in disguise somewhere in the city.

Jess had followed almost upon Star's heels when he gave the alarm, and by jumping his stallion over several dooryard fences he had gained the position near the bank. Here he exchanged the stallion for the spavined horse that was feeding in the yard, but traded horses again as soon as the detective fell from his saddle.

The loss to the bank was nearly one hundred thousand dollars, and it was years before the people of Nevada City recovered their financial footing.

Two weeks after the robbery the last man of the

posse came back. They reported that the outlaw had given up at last and drowned himself in the Clear Water, a tributary of the Feather River.

This report was proven untrue before Star left the hospital, as Jesse James was once more heard from in the shadow of the Sierras.

Bat Lynn and Peek Watson joined the detectives a little later.

Before they left Nevada City Davis and Flora were married.

Kirkham recovered from his wounds and spent six months in the jail at Auburn.

He was rescued at the end of that time in a mysterious manner, which was explained when it was known that Jesse James was in that vicinity. The captured outlaws were confined and served easy sentences.

In less than two years every one of them were liberated by means, it was supposed, of Jesse James' liberality.

When the detectives were ready to take up the chase Jesse James was in Northern California, and the chances for capturing him were less than ever.

Notwithstanding this, the brave fellows kept on.

Professional pride was united with personal grievances, and not one of them could rest, knowing that the unscrupulous bandit was still at large and cutting a bloody swath through the Western country.

Their further efforts to capture him were fraught with great anxieties, and interspersed with dangers both reckless and courageous.

TO BE CONTINUED.

[Next week's issue (No. 38) will contain the account of how the James boys captured their Biggest Prize, together with their daring holdup of the steamboat on the Cumberland River.]

Send in your exchange notices, boys. We will publish them all in a special "Exchange Department."

ABOUT FAMOUS MEN.

Boys, turn to page 31 and see the announcement of the Prize Contest.

Everybody has a chance to win one of the valuable prizes offered. Don't miss this opportunity, but send in your article at once.

Following are some of the best articles received during the week.
Read them, and then send in your own!

How Buffalo Bill Killed His First Indian.

(By Raymond Cooksey, Chicago, Ill.)

When Buffalo Bill was but twelve years of age he set out with a party of men, having Frank McCarthy as their leader, to drive some cattle to A. S. Johnston's army, then fighting the Mormons.

When they had gone to sleep one night the Indians scattered the cattle and then rode away.

Then the party with Buffalo Bill crept down a river toward the fort.

Buffalo Bill, being the youngest and smallest of the party, became somewhat tired and had fallen behind the others for some little distance. It was about ten o'clock, and they were keeping very quiet and hugging close to the bank, when Buffalo Bill happened to look up to the moonlit sky, and saw the plumed head of an Indian peeping over the bank. Instead of hurrying ahead and alarming the men in a quiet way, he instantly discharged his gun at the Indian's head. The report of the gun was immediately followed by a whoop, and the next moment about six feet of dead Indian came tumbling into the river. Buffalo Bill was badly scared, as he could hardly realize what he had done. He expected to see the whole force of Indians come down upon them. While he was standing there thus bewildered the men, who had heard the shot and who had seen the Indian take a tumble, came rushing back.

"Who fired that shot?" cried Frank McCarthy.

"I did," replied Buffalo Bill, rather proudly.

"Yes, and little Billy has killed an Indian stone dead—too dead to skin," said one of the men who had come nearer than the rest.

Then they went on and reached the fort just as reveille was being sounded.

The Ride of Paul Revere.

(By T. Middlecan, Cumberland, Md.)

Not a man is alive who remembers the famous ride of Paul Revere to Concord on the 18th of April, 1775.

It was agreed between him and a friend that if the British marched from the town, a lantern should be

hung in the North Church tower, and if they crossed Charles River that two lanterns should be hung in the arch of the belfry, and he would be on the opposite shore and give the alarm in every village and town in Middlesex County, so the people could be up and armed. His friend was wandering through the streets and lanes listening with eager ears, when he heard in the stillness of night the sound of arms and the tramp of grenadiers down to their boats on the shore. He climbed quietly to the tower of the church and up the wooden stairs to the belfry chamber. In the meantime Paul Revere, booted, spurred and ready to mount, stood impatiently by the side of his horse watching the belfry tower. As he looked he saw a glimmer, then a gleam of light. He sprang to the saddle, and looking again saw a second light in the tower. He started, and the sparks flew from his horse's hoofs. When he crossed the bridge into Medford it was twelve by the village clock. When he rode into Lexington it was one. He roused all the inhabitants, as he came through, with loud calls and knocks at their doors. You know how the British regulars fired, and how the farmers, in their shirt sleeves, chased the redcoats, firing from behind every tree, and stone wall, stopping only to load and fire. They followed them to Boston, where the British put themselves under the protection of their big guns.

How the "Star-Spangled Banner" Came to be Written.

(By Morris Rosson, Washington, D. C.)

During the second war with England in 1814 the British made an attack upon the city of Baltimore. The British warship moved up near Fort McHenry, and opened a heavy fire of cannon ball, bombshell and rockets. These latter were made like our well-known skyrockets, and could be thrown at the enemy. During the battle some Americans, one of whom was Francis Scott Key, carried a flag of truce out to the British fleet to secure the release of an American citizen who had been taken prisoner. The Americans were detained over night on a ship far to the rear of the attack. During

the night they listened anxiously to the sound of the guns and watched the red rockets and the bursting bomb, being sure that as long as the firing continued the fort still held out, but late in the night the guns became silent. Did it mean that the attack had been repulsed, or had the fort surrendered? Only daylight would tell.

Before dawn the anxious Americans were watching. The first faint light of day showed them the stars and stripes still floating over the fort. Then they knew that the attack had failed and that the Americans were victorious. While on the deck of the British warship Mr. Key composed the poem which has become our national anthem.

Washington's Generalship.

(By Thomas Robinson, New York.)

George Washington ranks first among all the great men of our country. He was a good fighter during the French-Indian war, always obeying his superior officers and trying to do good in every way he possibly could.

As a general he was one of the best that ever lived. When nearly surrounded in New York by a force far superior to his own, he retreated across the East River and left his enemy baffled on the other side.

But of all his great fighting and retreating I think his retreat across New Jersey through the Delaware River and into Pennsylvania, and then to turn about in the dead of winter and attack and defeat the enemy twice in succession, then fortify himself in a strong position, was something wonderful. It was through his efforts that we gained our liberty and thence he is called the father of our country.

From Soldier to President.

(By George Alter, Philadelphia, Pa.)

Theodore Roosevelt is considered by everybody a brave and honest man, who has worked up to the highest office of the United States by sheer pluck.

At the beginning of the Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, suggested raising a force of volunteer cavalry. A regiment, which later became popularly known as "Roosevelt's Rough Riders," was recruited by Colonel Wood and Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt. Many of the Rough Riders were cowboys from Texas and other parts of the West. They were joined by college graduates, clubmen and sons of wealthy families from the East, who were equally daring and equally fond of adventure. At the battle of San Juan, Roosevelt, at the head of the

Rough Riders, led the charge on the blockhouse, and with the Seventy-first New York Volunteers and other forces drove the Spaniards out of the blockhouse, with a slight loss. For this the people greatly honored him, and at the second term of McKinley's administration he was elected Vice President of the United States. When McKinley was assassinated on September 6, Roosevelt became President of the United States. And I think he's the right man for his position.

A Senator's Smoke.

(By James Tarpie, Pittsburg, Pa.)

Senator Bates, of Pennsylvania, has a very eccentric custom. It is that of carrying an unlit cigar in his mouth during the recesses of the Senate. On being asked his reasons for smoking in this manner, he recalled an incident, which is very interesting, not to say unique. It has been a custom of his of twenty-five years' standing, dating back to the Civil War. At the battle of Nashville Senator Bates (then general) was seated on his horse with an unlit cigar in his mouth. While shot and shell were screaming around and about him, he struck a match on his boot with the intention of lighting his cigar. Then comes the unique part. A piece of a shell whizzed by the general, extinguishing the match and killing his brother, who was also seated on a horse a short distance away. That cigar was never lit, nor has any other belonging to Mr. Bates been since.

An Anecdote About President McKinley.

(By Ben Holmes, Ohio.)

When the Civil War broke out McKinley was eighteen years old; he enlisted in the Twenty-third Ohio Volunteers.

Later he became first lieutenant of Company E. In one fight in the Shenandoah Valley, General Hayes, turning to Lieutenant McKinley, directed him to go forward and bring away a certain regiment, if it had not already fallen. McKinley turned his horse and spurred it into a fierce gallop toward the advancing enemy. Hayes thought sure the boy would be killed. For Hayes loved McKinley as his son, and would have been sorry to lose him.

Once he was completely enveloped in the smoke of an exploded shell, and they all thought he had gone down, but he was saved for better work in future years.

McKinley delivered his orders, from Hayes, to fall back, saying, in addition, "I suppose you would have gone to the rear without orders."

The colonel replied:

"I had about concluded to retire without orders, but, lieutenant, I believe I ought to give those fellows a volley before I go."

"Then up and at them," McKinley replied, and they gave them a volley which, for a time, stopped the advancing enemy long enough to give McKinley's regiment a chance to get back into the woods.

McKinley was in many more battles and showed the utmost bravery. On March 13, 1865, he received his brevet as major, and without seeing any more fighting was mustered out of the United States service July 26. This closed his military career. McKinley made his first political speech in the little town of New Berlin on a dry goods box four feet long, three feet high and three feet wide.

TALES OF HUNTING AND TRAPPING.

"A DURNED SCRAPE."

By JAMES REYNOLDS.

"I don't know," said Ben Myers, an old hunter and trapper, who was as thoroughly acquainted with the beaver streams and feeding grounds of the buffalo of the great Northwest, as a born and bred New Yorker is of the topography of his native city—"I don't know that I ever told you of the durned scrape I got into once at Cache Creek, when the waters riz?"

He and two friends, Will Burns and Ned Cochrane, were rolled up in their blankets in a trapper's hut, as the trapper made the remark.

"No, Ben, you never did," observed Ned. "Tell us about it."

"Wall, boys," said the trapper, "the scrape war kind o' ugly, seein' as how I warn't accustomed to water."

"Sp'ose you all know that Cache Creek is the durndest water course on this side o' the Rocky Mountains? It rises in a lake in the Sand Hills, whar thar's no water nine months o' the year; and it has no outlet, except it be underground inter the Sacramento.

"The channel o' the creek's about thirty odd feet deep, an' is usually as dry as a fellow what's been 'ith-out his whisky a week on the perarie, an' no place to go to get a supply.

"Wall, as I war sayin', one night, toward the latter end o' October, a party o' us, bound north, fotched up at the creek, an', as luck would hev it, we concluded to pitch our camp right in the bed o' the creek, as the wind on the plain was rayther blustery.

"When we got our traps down, an' given our hosses the range, sartin they'd be on hand the next mornin', we set about startin' a fire an' diggin' a hole in the bed o' the creek, hopin' to reach water, which we did.

"Now, the place in the creek we selected war between purty steep banks, an' thar war no way to get on to the plain above except by climbin' up the sides o' these; but

as we apprehended no danger, we made ourselves as comfortable as possible, havin' some good liquor with us.

"Aboaut ten o'clock—the wind by this time hed risen to a gale, and was a-whistlin' over our heads as ef kinder angry like that it couldn't git at us—we all turned into our blankets, purty considerably soaked through with what we'd bin pourin' down our throats.

"Soon we war asleep. It mought a-bin twelve o'clock when I felt the rain a-comin' down onto us like a streak.

"I got up, an', lookin' round some, concluded thar'd be no danger; that in fact, it'd hev to rain purty considerable fur some days afore it could fill up that ere deep cut in the yearth. I reckoned without thinkin' o' the lake; an' gittin' under the windward side o' the bank, fell asleep ag'in, fur I war purty considerable tired.

"I can't exactly say what time o' the night it war when I ag'in woke up.

"This time I heerd in the distance a roarin' noise that wasn't at all like the wind. It sounded in my ears like the beatin' o' the waves in a storm. Every minute it seemed to come nearer and louder—so loud that every man o' us started to his feet out o' his sleep, as ef they felt the day o' judgment war at hand.

"Ned Cochrane, there, who'd been on the creek afore in a rain storm, when he came to his senses, knew at once what it war. He wasn't too drunk for that. Rubbing his eyes, he looked around him for a minute, and then cried out, like a crazy man on a blind trail:

"'Git out o' this, men, as fast as you kin. Never mind yer traps. The creek's a-comin'!"

"The rest o' the company, heedin' his words, scrambled up the banks; but I, knowin' him to be drunk when he went to sleep, didn't feel in a hurry, and commenced a-pickin' up my things, rayther loth to git onto the plain.

" 'See, cap'n!' cried Cochrane, 'it's comin',' and the next minute he war out o' danger.

"I looked up, and thar afore me, within twenty rods o' whar I stood, war a wall o' water, comin' as swift as a racehorse onto me, thirty feet high.

"I war paralyzed. I couldn't move to save myself. Ef I had it would a-been o' no manner o' use. Afore I could move a step the wall o' water war upon me, and I found myself lifted off my feet and carried down with the course o' the current. Whar but a minute afore war a empty creek with banks thirty feet high on each side, 'twar now filled to the brim with water, and a-runnin' over.

"I ain't a good swimmer, an' I war about to give myself up as a lost man, when a black-lookin' object struck toward me. I seized hold on to it to save myself, an' foun' it war a b'ar.

"The varmint growled a little as I got hold on to his tail, rejoicin' that so long as the critter could swim I'd be on the top o' the water.

"S'pose it war surprised like myself—got caught in the water an' war tryin' to git to shore. I held on to it, detarmined that ef it got to land it'd hev to take me with it.

"For about a mile, I should judge, the water shot straight along, and the b'ar, seein' no chance to land, kept to the middle of the creek, while I hung close to its trail. The critter growled, but didn't show fight jest then, while I got up a calculation 'bout how I should manage him, ef he showed his paws oncet we got to land.

"While thinkin', I remembered that my rifle war lyin' at the bottom o' the creek, and I had only my knife with me. I felt half-tempted to stick him then; but I held back, knowin' that ef I did my chance o' gettin' out o' the water'd be mighty slim.

"All at onct the creek gev a sharp turn, and the water strikin' the bank opposite, which was squar in its way, we war carried, the b'ar an' me, with a rush on to it.

"The varmint got his fore paws on to the land, an' I, seein' the chance o' safety, gev him a push from behind that drew him right on the bank. Of course, he had to help draw me out or lose his tail, an' as he didn't seem disposed to do that, he pulled me with him.

"The beast war ungrateful. As soon as he felt himself safe he turned on me an' showed fight.

"Ef that's yer game, ve critter,' I cried, 'I'll give ye a chance.'

"With that I drew my knife, and gev him a cut, hopin' to reach his heart, an' so end the fight afore it had well begun. The b'ar, however, war too quick for me. It turned roun' and faced me, only hevin its hide slit. As soon as it felt the pain it gev a tremenjous roar, an' got right on to its hind legs, an' afore I knew it the b'ar had got one o' its forepaws on to my shoulder.

"Afore it could get its other on to me an' hug my body, I drapped to the ground. I war detarmined thar should be no wrastlin' match. It war rainin' too heavily for that, an' the groun' war too slippery.

"I now crawled close up to the varmint, an' lay quite still on my face as ef I war dead.

"When it seed me lyin' in the mud an' water, it stopped growlin' an' commenced smellin' o' me.

"I kept an eye on its movements, detarmined when next I hit it it would be in the right place.

"It now stood right over me. When it got through smellin' to see whether I war dead or alive, it turned to go away, satisfied 'twouldn't pay to chaw me.

"Jest then I raised my arm. It saw the movement, an' had I not driven the knife home to its heart it would a-torn me to pieces.

"As it war, in its dyin' agonies, it got hold o' me with its claws and made a big bite at me, an' then it hugged me close, for I had got on my knees, but my right arm war free, an' while he bit an' tore I kept turnin' the knife in his body until he dropped down an died.

"I war too exhausted to get away. I lay down on the b'ar an' fell asleep.

"When I awoke it war broad day; an' then I saw standin' round me Ned Cochrane and the others o' the company.

"A little whisky brought me to an' then we went to work, the rain hevin' stopped, an' dressed the ba'r, an' carried its quarters to our new camp, whar we made a breakfast off of him.

"That war one of the durndest scrapes I ever war in. How, tired as I war, I managed to kill that grizzly, is a mystery to me to this day.

"Now, thar's one thing I want to say to ye, boys, an' it's this: B'ar or no b'ar, don't ye ever camp in the bed o' a creek when thar's good high ground at hand, even ef it does blow a gale. It don't pay."

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